Doctor Inspects Kennedy X-Rays

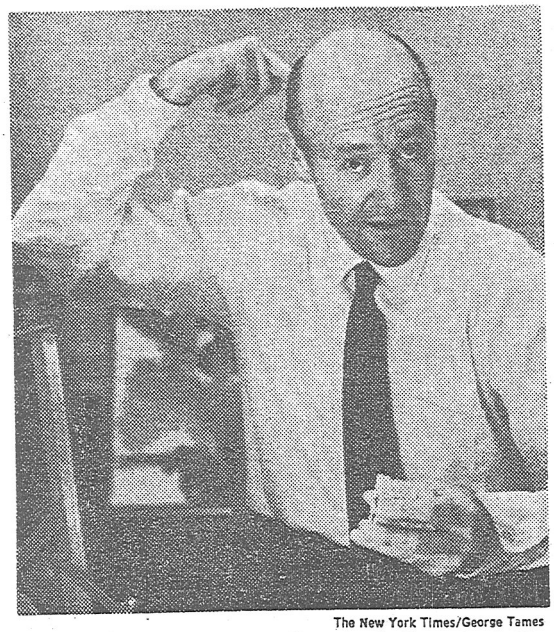
By FRED P. GRAHAM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—The family of President Kennedy, which previously allowed only representatives of the Government to inspect pictures and X-rays of the assassinated leader's body, has now begun to let interested medical specialists see the items.

Dr. John K. Lattimer, a New York physician who has written and lectured extensively about the assassination, became the first person not under Government auspices to see the items when he examined them yesterday at the National Archives here.

In an interview last night, he said that they "eliminate any doubt completely" about the validity of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald fired all the shots that struck the President.



The New York Times/George Tames

Dr. John K. Lattimer discussing how bullets struck Mr. Kennedy. He holds photo slides he used in research.

The commission, headed by Earl Warren, then the Chief Justice of the United States, found that when Kennedy was killed on Nov. 22, 1963, while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Oswald did all the shooting, firing from a building behind and above the President.

The 65 X-rays, color transparencies and black-and-white negatives taken in the autopsy have been a focus of controversy because the Kennedy family previously guarded them so closely that they were not allowed to be seen even by members and staff officials of

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Doctor Says Kennedy Items Uphold the Warren Report

The Warren Commission Report

The autopsy sketch shows path of one bullet. According to Dr. Lattimer, the point of entry was slightly higher.

the Warren Commission, which was appointed by President Johnson to investigate the assassination.

Critics of the Warren Commission have asserted that the items could disprove its conclusion that the President was struck by only two bullets, both from the rear.

It has been unofficially explained that the photographs were suppressed to avoid anguish to the family of the President, whose head was partly destroyed by the second fatal bullet.

Dr. Lattimer said that the wound that destroyed most of the right side of the brain was "horrible" and that the pictures should never be made public.

But he concluded that the Warren Commission might have made a stronger case, if the staff personnel who prepared its report had had access to the pictures and X-rays. He said the items made the following crucial points:

First, the initial bullet passed through the President's body at a distinctly downward angle, more than was shown in the schematic drawings released by the Warren report, he said. The artist who portrayed the path of the projectile into the back of President Kennedy's neck and out the base of his throat made it seem to be traveling almost parallel to the ground, while the pictures show that the front hole is considerably lower than the one in back.

Theory of Grassy Knoll

Some critics have asserted that this shot was fired from the front, by a second assassin hiding on a grassy knoll facing the Presidential car. Dr. Lattimer said that the front hole was so far below the back one that "if anyone were to have shot him from the front, they would have to be squatting on the floor of the car in front of him."

Second, photographs of the rear wound show "what appears to be a circular bruise which is typical of wounds of entry," he said.

Third, the X-rays prove that the front and rear holes were made by the same bullet, which passed through the President's body and left two tiny flakes of metal and air in the tissues along the path between the two holes.

Some critics have suggested that the two holes were made by separate bullets—one fired from the front and one from the rear.

Views the Bullet

Dr. Lattimer was also allowed to see other items that have been shown to only a few persons but have not been absolutely hidden from nongovernment experts. These included the President's bloody and bullet-punctured clothing, the sole bullet found after the shooting, and the President's back brace.

One final item, which was mentioned only in passing in the hearings conducted by Chief Justice Warren and other members of the commission, appears to have little importance in the slaying, but gives a revealing insight into the discomfort that Kennedy suffered as a result of the back injury he suffered in World War II.

The item is a knitted elastic Ace bandage of the type often worn by athletes to support sprained or strained limbs.

Dr. Lattimer said he had learned from physicians who gave emergency treatment to the President that he wore this bandage in a tightly wrapped figure 8, through his crotch and around back of his buttocks. Its purpose was to help immobilize his lower spine, but Dr. Lattimer said that it could also have helped keep him upright after he was hit by the first bullet, so that he was exposed to the second.

Dr. Lattimer, 57 years old, is the chairman of the department of urology at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. He became a student of assassinations by firearms after he observed numerous wounds as an Army doctor in World War II.

He has written a series of articles in medical journals, describing experiments he has conducted with rifles, scopes and ammunition similar to those used by Oswald.

His finding that a round from such a weapon would penetrate 47 inches of pine wood reinforces the Warren Commission's theory that the same bullet passed through President and seriously wounded John B. Connally, then Governor of Texas and now Secretary of the Treasury, who was riding in the car's jump seat, in front of the President.

Finds Report Understated

The Archives' records show that only twice in that period did the Government ask to see the items. The first was when the physicians who performed the autopsy authenticated the pictures, and the second was in 1968, when a suit was brought to which the items corroborate the Warren report.

Shortly after the assassination, the autopsy pictures and X-rays were given to the President's brother, the late Robert F. Kennedy, then the Attorney General. On Oct. 29, 1966, they were placed by the Kennedy family in the National Archives, subject to a contract that denied access for the next five years to all but certain governmental bodies.

Others Under Study

Under the contract between the Archives and the Kennedy family, only "recognized experts in the field of pathology or related areas of science or technology" may see the items, now that the initial five-year period has passed. These restrictions will continue so long as any of the President's immediate family live.

Burke Marshall, deputy dean of the Yale Law School, is the family representative who decides which "recognized experts" will be admitted. So far he has granted only Dr. Lattimer's request, but he said last week that he was also considering requests from Dr. Cyril H. Wecht of Pittsburgh and Dr. John Nichols of the University of Kansas, pathol-

fended off the suit by appointing a panel of four private pathologists to examine the materials and describe them in a written report.

The panel's report was couched in technical language, which according to Dr. Lattimer, understated the extent of the assassination, when a suit was brought to force disclosure of the materials. Ramsey Clark, who was Attorney General at that time,

VOL. CXXI....No. 41,623 1-9-72

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ogists who have written critically of the Warren Commission report, and from Dr. E. Forrest Chapman, the medical examiner of Wayne County, Mich.

Mr. Marshall said that, in granting or denying permission, he would not consider whether applicants were supporters or critics of the Warren report; but only if they had a serious historical purpose in seeing the material.

Some skeptics of the Warren Commission's findings were critical that Dr. Lattimer, a urologist, had been given first access to the material. Harold Weisberg, author of a series of critical works about the Warren report, termed Dr. Lattimer "an apologist for the Warren Commission" and asked, "What does a urologist know about bullet holes in human bodies?"